

Healthier VETERANS

A Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center Publication

Magazine

SPRING 2014



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A "Lucky Charm"
for a Navy Veteran

A Promise Kept
Women's Health Clinic
Grand Opening

Spotlighting Excellence
"Top Doctors" Caring for
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Beyond the Walls: Bringing Mobile Solutions to VA Clinicians

Washington DC Clinicians receive tutorials on the new iPads during the rollout.



Three hundred health care providers from the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center took a giant leap into the mobile health care arena March 5. The Department of Veterans Affairs launched its VA Mobile Health Provider Pilot Program to test how mobile access to patient information affects accessibility, productivity, workflow and communications across VA care teams. The Medical Center is one of the first of 18 VA hospitals across the nation to receive the fully-loaded devices.

The program utilizes iPads which come loaded with a suite of applications

developed by and for VA clinicians as part of a program designed to put mobile solutions into the hands of VA Health Care Providers. The benefit to physicians and Veterans include quick access to real-time information that impacts clinical decisions and Veterans have access to a series of health inventory apps for self-management.

The VA Mobile Health Provider Program is part of the multi-tiered VA Mobile Health Pilot Program aimed to improve the health of Veterans by providing technologies that will expand care beyond the traditional office visit.



Cooking Up a Fresh Start

The Washington DC VA Medical Center's Culinary Arts Training Program is putting at-risk Veterans on a new career path.

Several DC area Veterans are getting a fresh start on a career thanks to the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center's Culinary Arts Program.

The program is a partnership between the Compensated Work Therapy program and the United Planning Organization. The classes, conducted at the Medical Center's Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC), are preparing the graduates to earn their Food Handler's License. So far, 20 Veterans have completed the program and five have continued their education in full-time culinary schools.

The Culinary Arts Training Program began more than a year ago. As part of the VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program, Veterans receive realistic and meaningful vocational opportunities. The program also encourages successful reintegration into the community.

The class members hone their new skills by preparing special feasts to serve distinguished visitors and their fellow homeless and at-risk Veterans at the CRRC.

The CRRC is a 24/7 facility to link Veterans to diverse community partners with a goal of ending homelessness among Veterans. The

CRRC is not a shelter, but rather a one-stop location for a variety of different services to assist Veterans including: Primary Care, HUD/VASH case worker, employment assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, Mental Health, a variety of different Veteran and community organizations and now a Culinary Arts Training.

If you know of a Veteran who is interested in participating in the Culinary Arts Program, please contact the Compensated Work Therapy Program, 202-745-8000, ext. 53663.

As part of their training program, Veterans enrolled in the Culinary Arts Training Program regularly cook for homeless and at-risk Veterans at the Medical Center's Community Resource and Referral Center in North East, DC.





The same-day surgery waiting area received a major renovation that improved safety without interfering with the view from the mezzanine.

Growing to Meet Veteran's Needs for Years to Come

The many construction projects throughout the inside and outside of the Washington DC VA Medical Center have kicked up a lot of dust and caused some inconveniences for Veterans and staff alike. But the ability to grow and evolve in order to meet the needs of Veterans now and in the future makes it all worthwhile. If you haven't visited the VA Medical Center in a while, you may be in for some pleasant surprises:

- The new multilevel parking garage has added a much needed 440 parking spaces conveniently located near the front entrance.
- To meet the needs of the nation's largest growing population of Veterans, the Medical Center opened the new Women's

Health Clinic in April. See full story on page 9.

- The same-day surgery waiting area, located on the 2nd floor mezzanine overlooking the atrium, has received a major renovation to provide Veterans' family members with a safe, comfortable, quiet and calm wait area.
- The 4C Wing has been transformed from administrative office space to an inpatient wing offering private rooms with built-in seating that converts to a bed for family members to stay overnight.
- The two-story administration building will open this summer and provide 15,000 square feet of new office space. Current

office space within the Medical Center will be transformed into additional clinical space.

- The design phase for the new OEF/OIF/OND Welcome Center is now complete. The nation's newest Veterans: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF); Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF); and Operation New Dawn (OND), will soon have a convenient, one-stop center to help them transition to civilian life and the VA Health Care System.
- When complete, the new Research Building will allow VA researchers to continue their ground-breaking research which will benefit Veterans and others for years to come.

Rolling Out the New Secure Veteran Health Identification Cards (VHICs)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun issuing a newly-redesigned, more secure Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to replace the less secure Veteran Identification Card (VIC) which was implemented in 2004.

The new VHICs are distinguished by additional security features that better protect the Veterans' personal information. The new card has a different look and feel. In addition to being more secure, the card offers enhanced features that transform it into a health identification card. Similar to a typical health insurance card, the VHIC displays the Veterans' Member ID (a new, unique identifier) and a Plan ID that reflects the Veterans' enrollment in VA health care.

This spring, VA has begun its effort to automatically issue the more secure VHIC to each VIC cardholder. Veterans who already have a VIC card do not have to do



anything, a new VHIC card will be mailed to their address or P.O. box on file. The new cards will ensure

Veterans have identification that is safe, authentic, secure and accurate. VA recommends Veterans safeguard their VIC as they would a credit card, and cut up or shred the card once the new one is received.

For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic.

The new VHICs are distinguished by additional security features that better protect the Veterans' personal information.

Download the Washington DC VA Medical Center App and Learn More About Your Veteran's Hospital.



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Visit us at www.Washingtondc.va.gov



Fisher House: More Than Just a Place to Stay

The Washington DC VA Medical Center's Fisher House provides much more than a free, comfortable place for families of Veterans undergoing treatment to stay. The Fisher House provides a sense of community and offers 20 suites with private baths, beautifully appointed common areas and a fully stocked kitchen. For many, Fisher House provides something intangible and much more priceless; an opportunity to be near loved ones when they need them the most.

With the average cost of \$400 a night for a hotel in downtown DC, choices for many Veterans' family members are limited. For Nellie Rutherford, whose husband Bobby

and VA Medical Center campuses nationwide. There is never a lodging fee. The foundation estimates it has saved families more than \$200 million in out-of-pocket costs for lodging and transportation.

Veterans and active duty members may also stay at Fisher House if they are receiving long-term outpatient treatment and are accompanied by a family member or caregiver. A Veteran and caregiver may stay if they meet the following criteria:

- The Veteran must be medically stable and capable of self-care or accompanied by a caregiver who provides the necessary care;
- Travel more than 50 miles or two hours from the place of residence to the

Washington DC VA Medical Center;

- Able to stay in an unsupervised setting; and
 - Able to supervise minor children at all times.
- According to the Fisher House Manager, Stacey Childs, the Fisher

"I feel so fortunate to be able to stay here; otherwise I wouldn't be able to be here near him." For Ms. Rutherford, it's been more than just a place to stay. "It's a support group here, everyone and everything have been just wonderful."

House stays pretty full most of the time and gets a lot of support from the community. "We have a lot of volunteers who help out in so many ways, from spring cleaning to providing coffee and meals." She adds that only Veterans who have to have a caregiver with them are able to

stay at Fisher House.



stay at Fisher House.

Veterans who live far from the Medical Center, have multiple appointments and do not require a caregiver, may be able to stay at the HOPTEL. The HOPTEL rooms are located on the 3rd floor of the Medical Center and offer independent Veterans, who are medically stable, a comfortable alternative to a costly hotel stay or long drives back and forth to their homes. HOPTEL guests have access to the HOPTEL lounge with a large-screen TV, books, a microwave and a refrigerator.

In order to stay at the Fisher House or the HOPTEL, the Veteran's Primary Care Provider will need to put a referral into the patient's electronic health record. Veterans may contact Ms. Childs at 202-745- 52480 for more information.



The 20 suite Fisher House provides a "home away from home" for Veterans' family members.



Sharing Technological Health Care Advancements

The Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center is honored that dignitaries come from all over the world to learn about the VA's Electronic Health Records System. Medical Center Director Mr. Brian Hawkins and Chief of Staff Dr. Ross Fletcher host, on average, 20 visitors and foreign dignitaries

annually. Guests visit with the intention to model the VA's Electronic Health Records System. Shown here are the dignitaries and groups that have visited the Medical Center to date this year. If your organization would like to tour our facility contact Marvin B. Cornish, Director of Protocol at 202-745-8000 ext. 56149.

Ohio



Congressman Tim Ryan visited the medical center Jan. 28th for a facility tour and to engage in a Mindful Mediation session.

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Clark, director, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and his leadership team visited the medical center to discuss collaboration and partnership.



France



The Minister of Veterans Affairs for the French Republic, H.E. Kader Arif and four French journalists visited the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation area, WRIISC and the new Women's Pavilion.



Germany



Feb. 19th, the German Association of Healthcare IT visited our facility for a CPRS Demo.



South Korea



General Kwon Oh Sung, and a Korean Delegation visited with Korean War Veterans residing in the CLC to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War. General Kwon presented Dr. Joel Schwab, U.S. Army Veteran with a challenge coin.



Saudi Arabia



Dr. Imad Treish, chief operating officer and chairman, Department of Pharmacy, King Hussein Cancer Center, led a three-person delegation visiting our pharmacy and the Perata Max Robotic Medication Distribution System, the Bar Code Medication Administration carts and the electronic health record system with collaboration with Radiology, Pathology and Lab departments.



A Promise Kept: The New Women's Health Clinic Opens

City and state officials, Veteran service organizations and community partners joined VA Leadership to cut the ceremonial ribbon of the new Women's Health Clinic on April 8. The opening of the new clinic marks a promise kept, to provide world-class health care to all Veterans.

The 7,160 square foot reconfigured clinical space offers a respectful and inviting environment with six exam rooms, two procedure rooms, a meditation and alternative therapies treatment area, and a serene waiting area with computer access. Women are the fastest growing population of Veterans and the new clinic will help health

care professionals meet their needs for years to come.

The Women's Health Clinic is staffed by board certified physicians who provide comprehensive and gender-specific health care. For more information about women's VA health care call 202-745-8345.

"In addition to providing comprehensive women's health care, our new clinic expands the Medical Center's ability to provide more gender-specific services, such as gynecology, mammography and wellness education," L. Gale Bell, RN, Women Veterans Program Manager



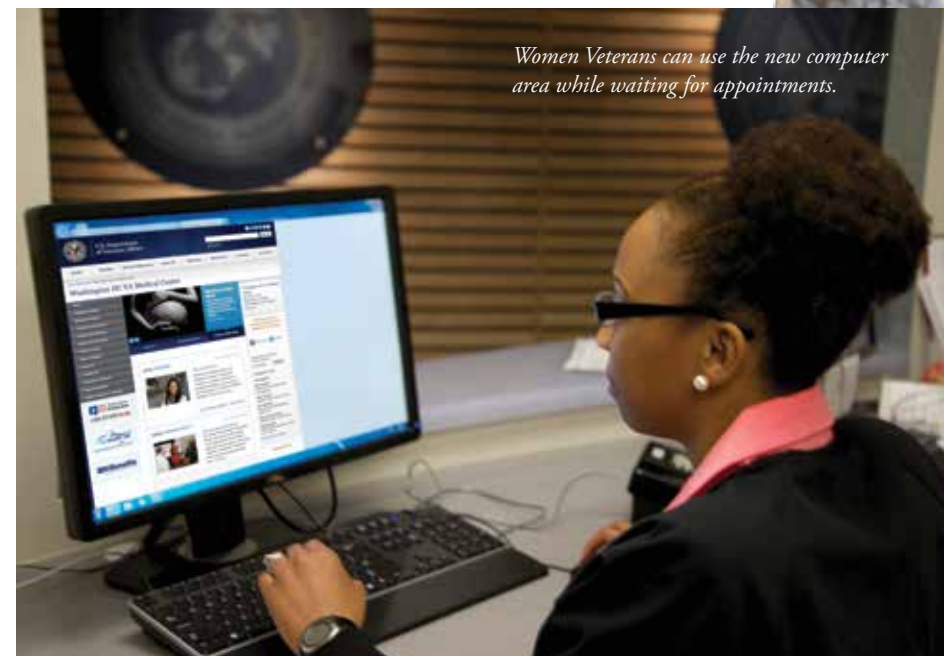
The new waiting area is large and comfortable and incorporates calming earth tones and elements like stone, fire and water.



The ribbon-cutting participants included: (L to R) Tonia Bagby, Ph.D., Acting Assistant Medical Center Director; Susan Riojas, wife of Chief of Staff, Depart. of Veterans Affairs; Elisa Basnight, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Brian A. Hawkins, MHA, Medical Center Director; L. Gale Bell, RN, Women Veterans Program Manager, Women's Health Clinic; Patty Shinseki, wife of Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Margaret Gibson, wife of Deputy Secretary, Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Brian C. Matthews, Associate Medical Center Director; Florence Champagne, Constituent Services Representative, Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards; Robin Peck, MD, Medical Director, Women's Health Clinic; and Patricia Hayes, Ph.D., Chief Consultant, VA Women's Health Services.



Soon women Veterans will have access to on-site mammograms performed in the new Women's Health Clinic.



Women Veterans can use the new computer area while waiting for appointments.



Greeting all who enter the new Women's Health Clinic is a tile mosaic butterfly, symbolizing the transformation of VA health care for women.



While performing Mohs surgery, Dr. Pavan Nootheti, pictured on the right, examines skin layers under a microscope for evidence of cancerous tissue.

New Mohs Suite: a “Lucky Charm” for one Navy Veteran

Having fought in the Korean War and in Vietnam, Navy Veteran Richard Byrd seemed calm and collected as he waited to begin his Mohs Surgery on a snowy Monday morning. He stated that sunbathing in Spain and Hawaii is what caused his skin cancer.

March 17th, St. Patrick’s Day, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center opened its doors to a new service for Veterans in Dermatology, Mohs Surgery. The two-room suite now offers an outpatient surgical procedure for Veterans that can be performed in only a few hours.

Mohs Surgery is a highly specialized surgery in which the tissue is removed one layer at a time, until all the skin cancer is removed. The procedure has a high cure rate and saves the healthy tissues surrounding the cancer. Although the patient is awake during the surgery they are given local anesthesia. The surgery, which can take a few hours, is definitely a team effort which includes a surgeon, nurse and histotechnician who makes the slides for the surgeon to examine the cancerous tissue layers under a microscope. Mohs Surgery is named after Dr. Frederic Mohs who developed the surgical technique in the early 1930s.

Performing the procedure was Dr. Pavan Kumar Nootheti, Chief of Dermatologic Surgery at the Washington DC VA Medical Center. Dr. Nootheti is one of the few dermatologists in the country who has a dual fellowship trained in both Mohs Micrographic Surgery and cosmetic dermatologic surgery.

With over eight years of experience as a board-certified dermatologist, Dr. Nootheti really emphasizes the importance of preventing skin cancer. “It is important to protect yourself from the radiation of the sun, so our skin cells don’t get damaged and progress into skin cancer. The sun can also cause damage to the collagen in our skin and cause wrinkles and sun spots,” said Dr. Nootheti.

Dr. Nootheti was trained in the art of managing complex skin cancers and facial reconstruction, and urges Veterans to learn from Mr. Byrd’s story by performing monthly self-exams and to see their dermatologist for an annual skin exam. For Mr. Byrd, the brand new Mohs Suite may have been his lucky charm on St. Patty’s Day because all of the cancer cells were removed and facial reconstruction was performed to repair the defect all in one day’s work.

By Yasmeen Telsem, Public Affairs Intern

Getting By With a Little Art and My Friends

The VA’s creative arts program helps Veterans in a variety of ways, from rebuilding fine motor skills to developing social skills.

Veterans at the Washington DC VA Medical Center, are recovering from physical or emotional disabilities with the help of the arts and camaraderie with their fellow Veterans. The creative arts program is a vital component of the Medical Center’s Recreation Therapy program.

According to Supervisory Recreation Therapist Jon Palks, CTRS, artistic self-expression improves self-esteem and reduces stress. “In a group setting, Veterans develop interpersonal skills and establish social connections. Ultimately, the creative process of making art enhances the mental and emotional well-being of the partici-

pants.” Palks said he has witnessed Veterans in the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Treatment Program become more socially interactive. “Some Veterans have carried over their artistic endeavors to establish places in their homes in order to create art on their own to share with their families.”

Annually, the Veteran/Artists compete locally and nationally in the Veterans Affairs Creative Arts Festival. In 2014, Veterans from DC won eight gold, four silver and eight bronze medals in the competition. For more information about the program call 202-745-8447.

“In a group setting, Veterans develop interpersonal skills and establish social connections. Ultimately, the creative process of making art enhances the mental and emotional well-being of the participants,”



Army Veteran, James Williams III sketching out of an art history book.



Untouchable Ron Brimmer Living with Peripheral Neuropathy and Allodynia

A 58 year-old Veteran maneuvers his scooter through a crowded supermarket. He has hazel eyes and an easy smile. He looks like he might be headed to the beach, he's in thin short shorts and thin silky tank top. But it's January and 20 degrees outside. Some on-lookers stop and stare, some cast him harsh looks. Some will laugh and take photos of him without his permission. Someone stops and says something derogatory to him. The Law & Compliance Department of one local grocery store goes so far as to tell him not to come back to the store.

Most of the time, his fellow human beings don't take the time to learn why Ron Brimmer, a Marine Veteran, is dressing the way he does. He tries to ignore the nasty looks and comments. Every so often he will hand them a business card that explains that he suffers from a fairly unknown condition called peripheral neuropathy and allodynia and everything that touches his skin hurts:

"During service to our country, I encountered numerous injuries. Due to severe nerve damage and other medical disabilities I suffer from, this is not a choice, but rather through necessity, that I dress as I do."

Contrary to what strangers may think, he is not some eccentric exhibitionist; he is a disabled American Veteran.

According to DC VA Medical Center Neurologist, Dr. Beth

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric K. Shinseki with Marine Veteran Ron Brimmer

Murninson, allodynia is a type of sensory impairment associated with some neuropathic conditions. To patients with allodynia, stimulus that is normally not painful causes extremely painful sensations. "Neuropathy is often something that people can't see but which produces a lot of suffering," Dr. Murninson said. The condition is believed to be caused by confused messages among the nerves which interpret sensations. Things as simple as clothing touching the skin or a mild breeze can make the body scream "pain".

"Imagine having horrible sunburn, 24/7," Mr. Brimmer explains. "Everything that touches my skin hurts." He has to have his clothing custom made using a special lightweight fabric imported from Italy. The seams of the clothing must be worn on the outside because seams cause extra friction and intense pain. He has to wear light colors because he doesn't really sweat and has to be careful to avoid heat exhaustion.

Aside from being extremely painful, the condition is isolating and restrictive. He can no longer go wherever and do whatever he wants. He'd love to travel again and has family in Ireland he longs to see. But before he travels, he has to make a lot of special arrangements with the airlines and hotels to be sure the staff is informed of required attire.

"It's a really big hassle," he said. About the most he can manage is a drive to Ocean City, MD, where at least there, his manner of dress

is usually not an issue. "Well, one time I had one guy threaten to call the police on me because of how I was dressed."

Even something as simple as going out to a neighborhood restaurant with friends is now out of the question. "Our friends will no longer go out to eat with us, they just can't handle it, who could blame them," he said with a shrug. He has come to accept his condition.

His wife, Breeda Cashman, handles the situation much differently. She has become very protective of her husband. If she sees someone about to take a photo, she will quietly stand and physically block the shot. She has also been known to go into a stoic silent stare down with strangers who are being rude. Usually if they encounter problems, stares or comments at a business, she simply refuses to go back.

When asked what he wants others to know about his condition. "I wish they would try to understand before they judge." He has a quote from Herodotus that has become his mantra -- The only good is knowledge, the only evil is ignorance. He says a few people are nice and will actually stop and ask him curious questions. But, that is on a good day of which he has too few.

Story by Sarah H. Cox

Background image: *Intermediate magnification micrograph of a vasculitic neuropathy, also neuropathy due to a vasculitis. Resin section (plastics) with toluidine blue stain.*

The Affordable Care Act For Veterans Who Need Health Care Coverage

The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs. Enrolled Veterans do not have to take any additional steps to have health coverage in order to meet the requirements of the new law. However, if you are a Veteran seeking health care coverage you can enroll in VA health care at any time.


Why enroll for VA Health Care?

- No enrollment fee, monthly premiums, or deductibles.
- Medical Care is rated among the best in the United States.
- Immediate benefits of health care coverage.
- Low or no out-of-pocket costs. Some Veterans may have small copayments for health care or prescription drugs.
- With more than 1,700 locations that will accept your care. You take your coverage with you if you travel or move.




Four Easy Ways to Apply for VA Healthcare:

1. Apply online:
www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll
2. Print the application from the website and mail to:
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

3. Visit your local VA healthcare facility; or
4. Call 1-877-222-VETS (8387)



The Affordable Care Act FOR VETERANS WHO NEED HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Integrating Wellness and Holistic Approaches into Traditional Health Care

Since 2001, the Washington DC VA Medical Center's War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC-DC) has been making a profound difference in the health and wellbeing of the lives of combat Veterans. Veterans come from as far away as Texas and Florida for the comprehensive assessments and innovative treatments provided by WRIISC-DC's multi-disciplinary team of specialists.

John Williams, a Vietnam Veteran who lives in Florida, was referred to WRIISC-DC after receiving a diagnosis of ALS, (aka Lou Gehrig's Disease). After four days of an intense battery of tests, WRIISC-DC doctors discovered Williams did not have ALS after all, but rather a disorder called myositis, which is a progressive muscle inflammation accompanied by muscle weakness. Although myositis can be quite serious, it does not carry the prognosis of ALS. This was good news for the Vietnam Veteran, and the correct diagnosis gave him a sense of hope and a new lease on life.

"Before I came to DC, I was making funeral arrangements and getting my affairs in order," said Williams.

Williams' tale is just one of many happy stories coming from one of the three Veterans Affairs WRIISCs in the Nation, (others are located in California and New Jersey). The programs' primary mission is to address post-deployment health concerns.



Within the walls of WRIISC-DC some pretty outside-of-the-box holistic treatments are used which one normally does not associate with the Department of Veterans Affairs including: acupuncture, massage, yoga, qigong, nutritional psychology, freedom labyrinth, mindfulness, gardening and various relaxation techniques. These complementary and alternative therapies focus on the whole person and emphasize strong collaborative partnerships between health care providers and Veterans.

Getting Started

Veterans participating in WRIISC are usually referred by their primary care providers. Almost all combat Veterans are eligible for WRIISC programs as well as Veterans who have specific post deployment

health concerns. Many Veterans referred to WRIISC have complex and or chronic health conditions with no known cause.

Veterans will undergo environmental exposure assessments and comprehensive medical evaluations. For those who are unable to travel, the exposure assessment can sometimes be accomplished via the phone. The WRIISC team will work with the Veteran's present health care team, providing evaluations, research and their specialized expertise.

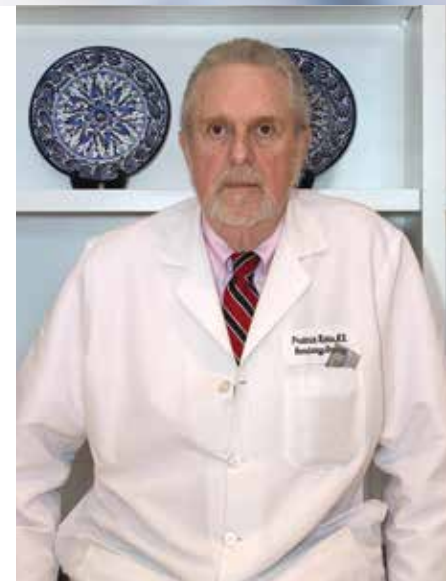
To learn more about WRIISC and some of the programs available through WRIISC and throughout the Medical Center, visit the comprehensive online resource: Health and Wellness Links: <http://www.washingtondc.va.gov/Wellness/index.asp#>



Dr. Frederick Rickles, *Hematologist*;
Dr. Elizabeth Cobbs, *Chief of Geriatrics,
Extended Care and Palliative Care*; and
Dr. Gregory Trachiotis, *Chief of
Cardiothoracic Surgery*.

Spotlighting Excellence “Top Doctors” Caring for DC Area Veterans

In March, *Washingtonian Magazine* released its distinguished “Top Doctors” list. The annual list is the result of asking area doctors who they would recommend for their family members. From open heart surgery to taking care of the elderly, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center’s physicians are leaders in their fields.



Veteran Treating Veterans

Frederick Rickles, M.D.
Hematologist

Having served in the United States Army, Dr. Frederick Rickles continues to have pride in the Army slogan “This We’ll Defend”. The Army Veteran is a well-respected hematologist, and is often referred to by his peers as the “guru of coagulation”. Dr. Rickles cared for American Soldiers at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research where he served as the Director of the Hemostasis and Thrombosis Research Laboratory. Dr. Rickles says he chose to practice health care for Veterans because it was the least he could do for those who served our country. With numerous awards to his credit, Dr. Rickles isn’t new to the *Washingtonian’s* “Top Doctors” list. He is the editor of the book *Cancer and Thrombosis* and the author of over 120 papers. Dr. Rickles’ continues to fight “Army Strong” to treat his fellow Veterans diagnosed with cancer.



Clinician Educator

Elizabeth L. Cobbs, M.D.
*Chief of Geriatrics, Extended Care and
Palliative Care*

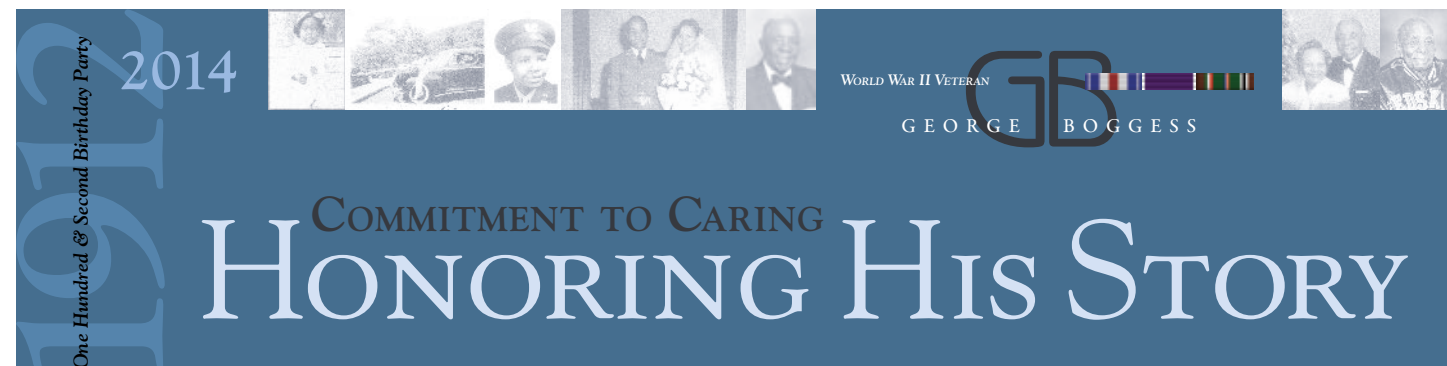
Having been with the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center for over a decade, Dr. Elizabeth Cobbs is a key player in the expansion of extended care and palliative care services. She cares for Veterans with serious or chronic illnesses and is committed to improving their health and wellbeing. She serves as the co-principal investigator of the Washington DC Area Geriatric Education Center Consortium, where she integrates humanities into interdisciplinary health education. Renowned in her field, this is not the first time she has been named as part of *Washingtonian’s* “Top Doctors” list. She says the reason the VA Medical Center provides such quality health care is because the clinicians truly care about Veterans.



Hands that Heal

Gregory D. Trachiotis, M.D.
Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Gregory Trachiotis is no stranger to accolades. This is the fifth time he has made the *Washingtonian’s* Top Doctor’s list. His office walls are filled with awards ranging from the Alley-Sheridan Scholar Harvard Health Policy Award to the VA Secretary’s Hand and Heart Award. With over 150 peer-reviewed publications and 75 national and international presentations on cardiothoracic surgery, Dr. Trachiotis’ clinical expertise is well known around the world. “In partnership with so many other expert and skilled physicians and providers, VA allows for a rewarding and enriching culture for both the Veteran and physicians,” said Trachiotis.



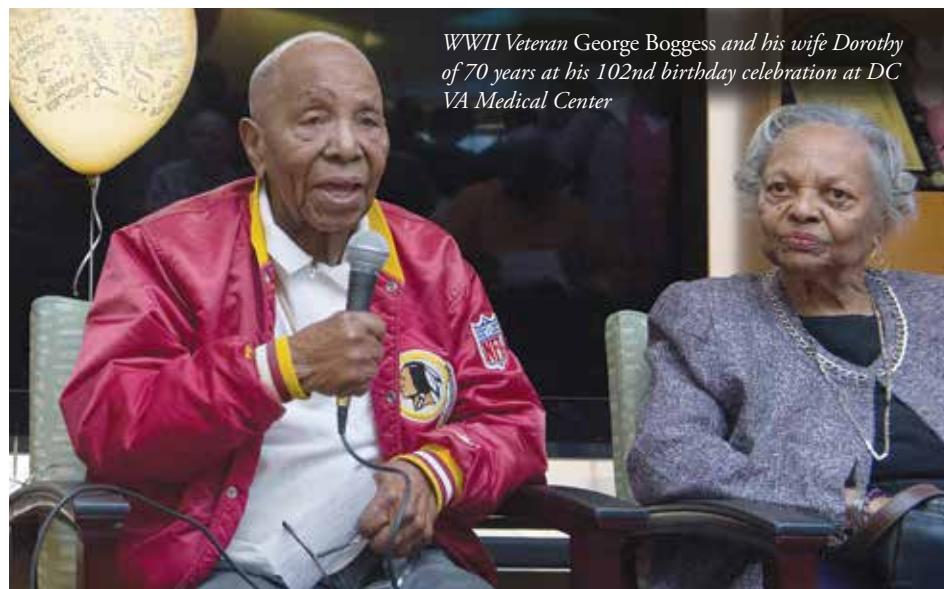
WWII Veteran Celebrates 102 Years of Living History

It isn't often that the Washington DC VA Medical Center gets to celebrate the birthday of a 102-year-old Veteran. Army Veteran George Boggess is a man whose character has truly stood the test of time. When he celebrated his birthday February 17, he became the oldest male resident of the Washington DC VA Medical Center's Community Living Center.

Originally from Waco, Texas, Boggess moved to Washington, DC in the Fall of 1936, and hasn't looked back since. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942. That same year, he married Dorothy Marks, who is still by his side more than seven decades later.

Boggess was promoted to the rank of warrant officer in 1944, spending time at Fort Myer, VA; Fort Meade, MD; Camp Kilmer and Fort Dix in N.J., before being deployed to help fight the war in Europe. Serving in England, France, Luxembourg and Germany, he was eventually stationed in the Belgium Forest during the German's final assault at the "Battle of the Bulge."

During this conflict, Boggess was hit by enemy fire and wounded in



WWII Veteran George Boggess and his wife Dorothy of 70 years at his 102nd birthday celebration at DC VA Medical Center

his right knee, yet was right back on the battle field only a couple of weeks later. Nonetheless, his resilience did not go unnoticed – Boggess received the Purple Heart for being injured in the line of duty and the Silver Star for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.

Growing up in Texas, Boggess was no stranger to discrimination. For him, segregation was a way of life. "I had no choice but to go to a black school...it was all I knew," he remembers. Even in the face of adversity, Boggess continued to

progress, earning his Masters in Social Work from Howard University. He worked for the government until retirement.

An avid supporter of civil rights, Boggess participated in several marches and was present for Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. When asked about the current state of African Americans in today's society, he admits, "Generally speaking, it's better."

So what's Boggess' secret to living a long life? "Walking!" he declares. "Walking is man's best medicine."

By Regan Thornton, PAO Intern

The American Academy of Pain Medicine Recognizes Neurologist Dr. Beth Murinson

The American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) recognized Washington DC VA Medical Center Neurologist, Dr. Beth Murinson, with the "Presidential Award for Excellence in Education." She was also inducted onto AAPM's Board of Directors as a "Director-at-Large".

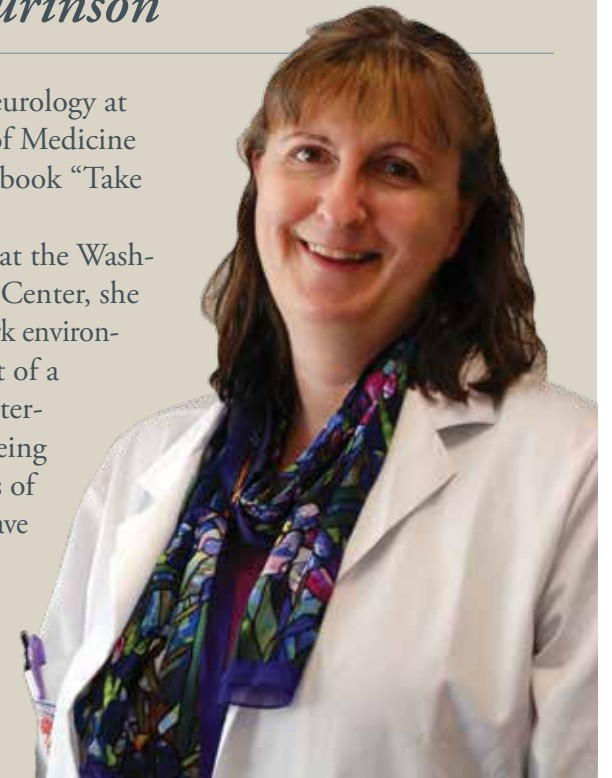
Each year, the foundation recognizes a health professional who has made major contributions in pain management education. The AAPM is the medical specialty society that represents physicians practicing in the field of pain medicine.

Dr. Murinson, a leading back pain expert, also serves as the Director

of Pain Education in Neurology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and is the author of the book "Take Back Your Back".

On serving Veterans at the Washington DC VA Medical Center, she says, "This is the ideal work environment. I love being a part of a multidisciplinary and inter-professional team and being able to improve the lives of patients, some of whom have complex health concerns."

Renowned Neurologist, Beth Murinson, M.D., Ph.D., joined the Washington DC VA Medical Center in December 2013.



Veterans & Community Health

sunday



Radio Outreach:

Veterans & Community Health Sunday Magazine

Recently, the Medical Center launched a new health and wellness radio segment to educate Veterans and the community and to encourage healthy choices. Join us on WMAL 105.9 and AM 630, Sunday mornings at 5 a.m. for our new half-hour radio show, *Veterans & Community Health Sunday Magazine*.



DC VA Medical Center employees participated in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Goal-Busting Celebration. Medical Center employees continue to remain engaged in the community while caring for those less fortunate. The center pledged \$93,000 in 2013, exceeding the \$85,000 goal. The Medical Center was recognized by the CFC National Capital Association with two awards, one for E-Giving, the best use of an electronic donation system and another for the best use of social media to promote the local CFC. Andre Tomlinson, CFC Campaign Manager, and Jonathan Wilson, CFC Facility Coordinator, were presented the e-Giving Award during the celebration.



WASHINGTON DC

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
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Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
50 Irving Street, NW
Washington, DC 20422
202-745-8000
www.washingtondc.va.gov

WINTER 2012

Bringing Health Care Closer to Home: Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Washington DC VA Medical Center operates five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and a Community Resource and Referral Center in DC and the surrounding areas. The CBOCs offer Veterans the opportunity to receive quality health care closer to where they live. If you have any questions, you may call the clinic nearest to you directly or to make an appointment you may call the Patient Service Center, 202-745-8577 or 877-DCVAMC1(1-877-328-2621).

Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) 202-636-7660
1500 Franklin Street, NE
Washington, DC 20018

Ft. Belvoir Community Clinic 571-231-2408
9300 DeWitt Loop
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

Southern MD VA Outpatient Clinic 301- 884-7102
29431 Charlotte Hall Road.
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

Greenbelt Community Clinic 301-345-2463
7525 Greenway Center Drive
Greenway East Professional Center, Suite T-4
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Southeast Community Clinic 202- 745-8685
820 Chesapeake Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20032

Southern Prince George's County Community Clinic 301-423-3700
5801 Allentown Road
Camp Springs, MD 20746



My HealthVet is a web-based application designed specifically for Veterans and their families. It provides Veterans access to personal, secure, convenient, and trusted health information that improves their health and empowers them as health care consumers.

To register, stop by the MyHealthVet Office during your next visit to the DCVAMC or if you prefer, you may schedule an appointment by calling: (202) 745-8000, ext. 8715.

Services available on My HealthVet:

- Managing Appointments
- Ordering prescription refills online
- Establishing a personal health journal
- Wellness reminders

Visit www.myhealth.va.gov for more information.



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